1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
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593 602 father; frequently, because of the opportunities of competition for women among distant groups, there are actual animosity and warfare.

Since older and younger brothers are clearly differentiated by separate terms, wawa and yukiyuko, and have a definitely regulated behavior toward each other, the relationship of bapa and his sons must be considered from this point of view. Does a father distinguish between older and younger sons, even though there is no term to express these functional differences and all sons are gatu? The answer is decidedly in the affirmative, as will be seen below from the chronologically ordered account of the normal relationship from the period before birth of the son until the death of both father and son.

262 When a "married" man has no children, he must observe a number of food taboos until a wife announces pregnancy. He cannot eat, whether he or another kills or gathers them, porcupine, emu eggs, snake eggs, iguana eggs, turkey eggs, crayfish, large barrimundi, or [851] crabs, until he acquires the right by old age. A child's birth removes all these taboos, but the child must be his, not a brother's.

787 842 843 The ideas surrounding birth give the father a prominent part in the procedure. The various spirits of the unborn and the dead live with the clan totems in the clan wells. As stated, a father dreams that the child comes to him, asking where it can find its mother, and enters the mother's vagina. The next day the man informs the wife that she is going to have a child, or, if it is his first child, to test the value of his dream he may keep it a secret. The natives believe these dreams are always true since a wife usually tells her husband a few days later that she has felt the movements of a child within her. The husband knows then that his dream is true. He sharpens his spears, rewraps his [777] spear-thrower, and prepares to go hunting, for he knows that he will be successful because his child has come from the totemic spirits within the water, bringing good luck with it. He kills an abundance of game and brings it home. A slight ceremony takes place, after which [262] he may eat all food, for, according to Murngin thought his wife having conceived, he is now a father. This removal of taboos on his diet furnishes one of the reasons for a man's eagerness to have children.

787 842 A child comes from its father's well on the father's clan territory, for clan descent is patrilineal. Sometimes the father may be in another part of the country and may dream that the child came from the well of the local clan. Then it would inherit not only its own clan's totems, but also those of the other, yet it would be a member only of his father's clan. The second water hole must belong to the same moiety

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brother's, and, with the father's senility recognized, the oldest son assumes his place as head of the family; at least he is looked to for guidance by the brothers and sisters.

Before circumcision, when a small boy finds a wild bees' nest, the honey of which is a greatly prized delicacy, he goes to tell his father (mari, gawel, and others, too), who will open the hollow tree for the boy and allow him with the aid of his small brothers to eat all of it, but will not eat it himself nor allow any but the brothers to touch it. This rule is very important, for it rests upon a magical idea that the boy will have good luck in the hunt and in later finding large nests. Should a man eat any of the boy's first wild bees' honey, a father would consider this more than sufficient cause to fight him. It is the father who takes the initiative in protecting the small boy's interest.

When a child, particularly a son, becomes ill, the father either treats him magically or uses native remedies. Should a mother neglect her child, or through misadventure allow it to be harmed, most fathers would become angry and beat her, and in some cases try to kill her.

When a son dies, the actual father and his brothers lead in the mourning ceremonies; when a father dies, all the varieties of sons within the limits of the clan cooperate in leading these ceremonies. When the bones of a man are exhumed after burial, it is the father who opens the grave and, with the help of the son's dué (the father's waku), cleans the putrid flesh off the bones.

The death of a son is a great social loss to the father, since there is no one to take his place; but the death of a father is felt less severely by the children. If the children are small, they and their mother pass through the levirate to the father's younger brother. If the children are grown, the father usually has become very old and his death causes them little social loss. The death of a father in our own society creates a greater social maladjustment than in the native society. The Murngin children have been calling the father's brother father, and, further, their behavior toward this younger brother of their father has differed but slightly from that toward their own father. The mother does not go back to her own but continues in the same social group. There is no change in the social adjustment of the children or other members of the kinship system. The personal loss of a father to the family and to society is usually keenly felt, as is the death of sons by a father. When a son dies a father beats his own head and attempts to wound himself to show his sorrow.

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For a few days a mother carries her newborn child under her arm in a strip of paper bark. At this time she covers it with charcoal to make it turn black, for it is very light when born and it is thought that it will stay that color unless so painted. In a short time she holds her infant on her shoulder, its legs straddling her neck and its arms clinging to her head. She carries her children out into the bush with her while she gathers the plants, or shell food, for the family larder. When the little boy is about four years old he stays in camp with the other little ones. But the young girls continue going with their mothers, who during this early period start teaching them the countless things they must know about the fauna and flora, the land and the sea, in order to become good food-gatherers. When a boy is to be circumcised the mother always makes presents to the man who paints his body for the ceremony. When the son kills his first kangaroo or emu, the bones are painted and she carries them as she does those of a dead relative. This is to bring the son good luck in the hunt.

If the son's fathers are dead, the mother is sometimes consulted as to the proper time to circumcise him. When the boy returns from his journey to all the local clans, inviting them to come to his circumcision ceremony, it is she who brags about the number of presents given him. She always exaggerates because it is felt that this will also be helpful for the son in acquiring the good things in later life. While he is being circumcised she cries and beats herself. The actions are customary, but they are more than that to the mother, who is deeply affected when she hears her son's cries. The sisters to the mother act in the same way during this ceremony. A mother seldom corrects her child, this being left for mari and nati to do.

When a child is hurt or dead a mother always cuts and beats her head to show her grief. After the child is buried she paints herself with red ocher to cleanse herself of ceremonial impurity so that she can go out for wood and food with the other women. She waits until after burial to paint herself because the body would not decompose if she did it before. After the bones have been prepared for dispersal among the women she is one of the carriers and is usually the first to get them.

The child sees the mother's sisters as arndi not only because they are her sisters but because the father may die and the mother will be transferred to a younger brother of the father, or an older brother may die and his wives will be given to the child's father. In both cases the women would be arndi as wives to the child's father.

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
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CHAPTER VII

MURNGIN MAGIC AND MEDICINE

DESCRIPTION OF MURNGIN MAGIC, WITH DETAILED DATA

A. Introduction

Among all the clans of the eight tribes and all the members of the groups there is a profound belief in magic. The effects of its power are twofold: it can harm and destroy, or it can benefit and cure. Among the northern clans of the Murngin and Yaernungo tribes there is a belief in magic but there are no magicians of any kind, while among the southern and more western tribes magicians, both evil and good, are found everywhere. The "black" magician (sorcerer) can injure or kill his victim, and the "white" magician can cure him or restore his lost faculties. All deaths, sicknesses, certain types of bad luck, and, in general, all those occasions on which the individual is seriously out of adjustment with his community, physically, mentally, or socially, are looked upon as the effects of black magic; and in almost every case except that of soul-stealing the white magician is called in to remedy the situation.[1] There is here a kind of warfare between the forces which do good and those which do harm to man. The latter are related to an organized set of concrete techniques embodied in the person of the black magician, while an entirely different set gives practical expression, in the personality of the white magician, to those forces which control the effects of black magic. The struggle then becomes a warfare between these two types of magical personalities. This does not mean that they are necessarily enemies, though they usually are; furthermore, a black magician is not looked upon by all men as fearsome: to those of his own group he is a constant source of strength, since they seek his aid in repaying a wrong done to them by another group.

Occasionally when a very old person dies the diagnosis is, "It was nothing, just old age"; but this is very rare. Among some of the magical causes are: the machinations of an evil magician; possession by an

[1] Whenever a magician, black or white, is called upon, payment must be made to him.

1; Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
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756 supposed to inhabit the matjitji; and when a magician parts with a old one he first rubs it under his arms and then against the new bag t allow his spirits to enter this other bag.

[177] The natives in the western part of the territory of the eight tribe use these bags generally for good luck in hunting or to hold in thei mouths when they are fighting. Its use is not confined to the ma gician (see Murngin Artifacts, Appendix II, page 478).

Willidjungo Acquires Power and Becomes a Medicine Man.—Th healer Willidjungo, one of the most active and respected white ma gicians among all the tribes in northeastern Arnhem Land, was large, rather heavy-set man with a mop of straight hair. He was ver amiable and inclined to joviality. He had six wives and a number o children. He belonged to the Yandjinung linguistic group, which i in the western part of the area. He had all the abilities accredited t the ordinary healer type, but unlike a few of the magicians he coul not kill as well as cure.

One day when Willidjungo was a mature man having several wives an children he was out in the bush looking for wild honeybees' nests. Afte a time he decided to return home. On his way back to camp he felt a pai in his right leg near the hip. He knew afterwards that the familiars whic he later acquired had given it to him. His leg became very stiff and staye that way for over a week. During this time he lay in the camp and covere himself with paper bark to keep warm. One of Willidjungo's wives slep by him. The two familiars, who were a little boy and girl, started talkin to him underneath the paper bark. They talked in a rhythmic chant: "Dul dul! dul!—ter ter ter."

Said Willidjungo, "The sound was like a small frog out in the lilies."

Willidjungo woke up his wife. "You better sleep among the wome tonight," he said. His wife left their hut and went over to her mother' and father's. She was very frightened of these two spirits. The two con tinued talking. They went back into the bush and Willidjungo followe them.

"I kept listening to that noise they were making. I listened but I di not look, and followed them. The two things came back to camp and came with them. They sat down by my fire and talked. When it was nigh and dark those two spirits flew in the tops of the trees. They had the soun of a quail flying. They sat on the top of my head and on my shoulders They had white feathers, but I did not know that at that time. I coul only feel them on my head."

Morning came. Willidjungo went out to look for food and to fish. Th spirits left and did not come back until the afternoon. "They did not com

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
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either in a special house made for it or within a clearing inside the jungle thicket. All this is done without ceremony. The trumpet is usually blown to ascertain if it has good tone and carrying quality, and also to indicate to all the tribe then present that preparations are under way for a Djungguan. 852 534

Normally two boys are initiated at one time. The fathers are approached for their permission to circumcise their sons.—Frequently the fathers petition the leader to initiate their sons, saying, "I'll give you presents of spears and my totemic emblem string if you will make this little son of mine a young man [yaoer-in]." 852

The boy may belong to a clan of either moiety. When the father decides that his son is old enough he informs him he must cease from being a child (dje-mer-ku-li) and become a yaoerin. The fathers, if asked by the leaders, always give their permission, unless they have decided to have their boys initiated in some other locality.

2. The little boys who are to be circumcised are told by their fathers and the other older men, "The Great Father Snake smells your foreskin. He is calling for it." The boys believe this to be literally true and become extremely frightened. Usually they take refuge with their mother, mother's mother, or some other favorite female relative, for they know that the men are organized to see that they are taken to the men's ground, where the great snake is bellowing.

The men take the boys from their mothers, the other women, and uninitiated children. All the female relatives grab up spears and spear-throwers and pretend to fight the men to prevent them from removing the boys. Some of the women, as do the men, participate in this ritual act in a spirit of play, others wail ceremonially, and some of the nearer female relatives shed real tears, both for the loss of the boy and the fact that he must go through the ordeal of circumcision.—All this is to make the boy think that the women are protecting him from the great snake, and, symbolically, to keep the great snake from swallowing him.

Some of the women talk to each other while they form a ring around the boy to protect him from the men: "Our sons [brothers, et cetera] have [or they are going to have] a great multitude of relatives, and their people are to be found everywhere. Our sons have many possessions. They have killed many kangaroos, wallabies, and birds, and they have speared many fish and turtles. Our sons and brothers have gone many places and speak many languages, and they have many presents from all their people." All this is exaggerated, but it is said for 852 777

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
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its magical effect, to insure the boys' acquiring many presents on the journey on which they are sent by the older men, and to enable them always to have plenty of good things during their lives. The above quotation is not a formula and is varied according to the speaker.

The two boys, with a near relative such as an older dué (sister's husband, father's sister's son), are sent out (at times this does not occur), usually on separate paths, to visit the various relatives and clans to invite them to the coming ceremony. The relatives of the boys who are present at the time they are sent away and who belong to outside clans are always desirous that the initiates visit their clans. The father chooses a trail for the boy to follow, but the man who accompanies and protects the boy usually modifies the father's directions to fit the circumstances of the journey.

The neophytes usually stay away a month, but their journey may last two moons, or less than one. If they leave when the moon is full they return when there is a new moon. In later years a man always boasts about the many clans he visited, the great distances he traveled, the long period he was absent on his journey.

The young men are sent away, it is said by the old Murngin men, so that they will meet new people, which is felt to be a good thing, and make lifelong friends among their more distant classificatory relatives. This ritualistic making of friends is not organized among these people as highly as in West Australia, nor does the path followed by the boy occupy as important a place in his later life as it does in West Australian regions.

One Wessel Island boy of the Perango clan went down through Elcho Island, where he visited the clan of that country, through Arnhem Bay and into the country of the Gwiyamil clan.[11] A candidate for initiation from the Wangurri clan went overland to the Barlamomo of Blue Mud Bay.

Before leaving, the boys are given new armlets which are then painted with white clay; white cockatoo feather headdresses are put on them, and their faces are daubed with white paint. Usually a white clay bark band is tied around the forehead. Red ocher and kangaroo fat with a white clay outline are put on the boys' faces. A large hair belt, suspended from which is a painted opossum fur string pubic covering, is put on the initiate for the first time. Before this he has gone completely nude, as do all uncircumcised boys.

Wherever the boy goes on his journey the people are informed of the coming ceremony and invited to attend. All those who are invited give

[11] See the clan and tribal map, page 40.

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
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no other ornamentation upon it. The red ocher is not only for decoration, but it adds spirit "power" to the receptacle.

East of the Goyder River the bag is used exclusively by the medicine man, whose spirit helpers reside in it. West of the Goyder River it is also worn by anyone who so desires for good luck in hunting. Here also it is held in the teeth during a fight to add magical powers and bravery to the fighter.

Fighting "Tie."—Sometimes a "tie" is carried in the mouth to gain power during a fight. The tie is made by the same technique as the spirit bag. It is made of coarse vegetable fiber string, is flat, about eighteen inches long and three inches wide, and has a fiber string handle which allows the owner to wear it around his neck when not in use. It has ornamental value, although it is never decorated except with alternating bands of dark and light fiber.

The netting stitch is not used in the making of bags or the tie in this area as it is in Queensland.

Forehead Bands.—This article of ornamentation is made of small thread-like string with a mesh that is a sixteenth of an inch in diameter. Its length and width correspond to the size of the wearer's forehead. It is worn only by males. Each end of the band has a string attached to it for tying at the back of the head. The bands are used in the Gunabibi, Ulmark, and Djungguan ceremonies. They are covered with a solid layer of white pipe clay or red ocher. Sometimes bands are made of paper bark tied with fiber string and painted with red ocher or white clay.

Women's and Children's "Harness."—This curious body ornament used by women and small children looks, when worn, much like a harness used for hitching horses to a carriage. It is composed of one continuous strand of twelve to eighteen strings of two-ply vegetable fiber. The string is formed into two large equal loops which are joined by wrapping with fiber string for a distance of about ten inches. Each loop is then wrapped separately for from two to five inches from both sides of the joint. The wrapped sections are usually painted with alternating white and red or yellow and red bands of paint. The unwrapped string frequently is covered with red ocher.

Women and children wear the harness during ceremonies. The wrapped portion falls down the middle of the back; the arms are slipped through the loops which are made to cross below the breast.

Bugle-grass Necklace.—The bright straw-yellow bugle grass is cut into small beads about one-half inch in length and strung on a thin vegetable fiber string. The string is then looped back and forth to form about eighteen lengths of ten inches each. To each of the two ends of the bunch of loops is attached a single fiber string. The beads are worn against the throat by tying the fiber strings at the back of the wearer's neck. Men, women, and children wear these ornaments. The bright yellow is particularly effective in contrast with the gleaming black skin of the aborigines.

237 nificance and *must* be accumulated by the hunter.[15] This
778 fat, as well as the feathers of the birds mentioned above, are known as *tjärnbin* and play an important part in the ceremonies called *kunabibbi* and *ŋulmark*. The long bones, bills and some of the flight feathers of these birds are also accumulated and wrapped with paperbark into neat parcels called *täbarr*.

264 About midday, or at the conclusion of a drive for game
512 or fish, the people look for a suitable place to make a fire and to cook such small game as opossums, bandicoots, native cats, "goanna" or fish, as they may have secured. If they are hungry, some vegetable food may also be cooked, but the principal meal of the day is eaten in the evening
461 after the return to camp. For a couple of hours during the
512 heat of the day the natives rest. But they are rarely idle; even during these halts the men may often be seen squatting before little fires, making or repairing spears or other weapons. The women also take advantage of such respites to work at the string or mesh baskets which they carry rolled up in a half finished state, just as a white woman may take up knitting or other handiwork in moments of leisure.

[777] [15] Failure to do this would bring "bad luck", a ritual visitation, upon the hunter or on the people. The *tjärnbin*, the name given to the fat and also to certain of the feathers of the mammals and birds which have been mentioned, is believed to carry, in concentrated form, the *marr* or "spiritual power" of the animals. To waste this
[753] *tjärnbin* is to risk a ritual visitation, and if it is held for very long there is a too great concentration of *marr* so that the people will
[751] become sick. To dispel this *marr*, to avert the danger of sickness from it, a ceremony called *kunabibbi* must be held in which the fat and the feathers which are called *tjärnbin* are used and the danger
[777] is averted. It may be noted also that failure to cook game which has been killed, such as the flesh of one of the kangaroos, will bring "bad luck" and impair the *tjämbait*, the prowess or "good luck" of the hunter.

9: Thomson E-5 (1935-1943)1949
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uninitiated because they are endowed with a force called *marr* (*mana*)[18], and large presentations of food and *gerri* are obligatory to all those to whom these *räŋga* have been revealed and who thus share in the solidarity of the group.

Such obligations recur at every stage in each initiation, and following upon each ceremony a man must make a big ceremonial presentation of objects of value, *gerri*, such as fine spears, belts of human hair and especially gifts of the type that are appropriate to the geographical quarter (*kumur*, page 67), within the ceremonial exchange cycle in which his clan territory lies.

If a man comes from a group some distance away, and the occasion is an important one, a dugout canoe (*lippa lippa*) may be presented. This is a big gift and highly valued. It is important to realise that there is no attempt to assess the value of these things but rather to create a feeling of goodwill, to leave behind a good impression, which a man knows will enhance his prestige and react in his favour in future transactions. He knows also that he builds up goodwill by a reputation for generosity and that this in turn may mean that he will be selected as the recipient of the *wärna*, the armlets of opossum fur string or *lindiritj* (Lorikeet's feathers) and other paraphernalia

[18] *Marr* is a kind of spiritual force or "power" very like the Polynesian concept of *mana*, which underlies social and ceremonial life. It occurs in all sacred objects and is the "force" or "power" which makes them dangerous to the uninitiated or profane and a source of strength and "power" to the fully initiated members of the clan or other organisation. *Marr* is not strength or power, danger or sacredness, alone, although it may be each and any of these things. It is the power which makes a *räŋga*, a totemic object, sacred, which makes a dead body dangerous, and which brings good or bad "luck" in hunting. *Marr* is the force which makes a man *tjämbait*, i.e. successful or "lucky" in the pursuit of game.

which are stripped from the *rärŋga* and presented to special individuals after the conclusion of the ceremony, and which carry *marr*, confer prestige on the recipient and bring him "good luck" (*tjämbait*) in hunting.

But in any case, failure to discharge the obligations which he incurs at these times would be unthinkable, for a man believes that he is in a state of danger from *marr* (*mana*), and that ritual visitation will follow if he does not propitiate the group concerned. On this account, and because he would suffer in prestige by failure to discharge these obligations, they are not incurred lightly. This was brought home to me vividly in Arnhem Land when Raiwälla of Mildjiŋi clan, a man who was with me for years, and who accompanied me everywhere, asked me not to take him with me when I was invited to *ŋarra* (*märdai'in*) ceremonies. He explained, in some distress, that because of his association with me, he had been invited to attend many more *ŋarra* than would normally have been the case and was incurring thereby obligations to make *tadoit* payments (page 40) of food and *gerri* (material wealth) which he would not be able to discharge. Although the people knew that he was far from his own territory and understood his position, and although they assured him that he need not make any return presentations, he would not accept this. If he had done so he would not only have been in danger from *marr*, which had not been returned with the ceremonial presentation food or *gerri*, but he would have lost face and been placed in a position of inferiority. The urge, the "drive", furnished by these psychological attitudes in a fully organised aboriginal society are more forceful than any material urge. They far outweigh any desire to gain possessions and are the most important motive forces behind much of the hunting, and the organised and sustained work

first phrase means "return from hands", i.e. from handling the bones, the second "return from mouth". Payments in each case are made to the other near relatives. This is a ritual act and may be interpreted as a token "payment" or gesture in formal expiation of an infringement of the solidarity (the *marr*) of a group, members of which are bound together by the sharing of a special bond.

In the case of the ceremonial revelation of the jealously-guarded sacred totemic objects of the clans, with their intense solidarity, it was pointed out that the reciprocal gifts required are substantial and exacting, and I have shown that a considerable amount of organisation is required to enable a man to discharge these obligations.

But it must be remembered that there is also another side to these transactions to which reference has already been made, and that a man not only gains greatly in prestige and social status, and increases the scope of the ceremonial exchange cycle in which every individual of standing plays a part, but above all, the *marr* or "spiritual power" from the successful conduct of these reacts directly upon all his other activities. It assists him in hunting and brings him "good luck" (*tjämbait*) and as has been stated, it adds to his prestige, his social status.

A graphic illustration of the belief in the spiritual power which reposes in the sacred *räŋga*, occurred while I was living with these people. Immediately after the revelation of the *räŋga*, a ceremony associated with the sun totem of a clan called Maräŋo, a young man went out turtle hunting in his canoe, and returned with four turtles. The old men credited the success of the expedition to "good luck" (*tjämbait*) and claimed that the "body", really the "skin" (*kälŋa*) of the young man was still covered with

777 778 [796] the fine powdery dust (*känno*),[20] of the ceremonial ground, and declared that the turtles were therefore "*yarkomirri*" (lit. "bearing a name", i.e. sacred). A rite was performed to remove the tabu, before the flesh could be eaten by the [431] uninitiated. Even then those people, other than members of the totemic group, who ate the flesh, were called upon to make a payment of the type previously described, called *tudoit*, in this case to the fully initiated members.

182 [461] 431 [561] [796] 606 604 Reference has been made to the obligation to hunt which a man incurs in order to provide animal food for the women upon whom he must depend for the large quantities of food which he requires to meet the periodic ceremonial presentations which mark almost every stage of initiation as well as the termination of each critical stage in his life. This obligation is especially stressed in his relationship with his *mukul rumaro*[21] (potential mother-

[20] *Känno* is really ash, fine, white, powdery wood ash. This man was said to be "*kälya kännomirri*", "skin with ashes", because the white dust of the ceremonial ground was still on his body and carried its *marr*.

[601] [21] As this paper may be read by many economists who may not have anthropological training, some reference to the kinship system of the aborigines may be of assistance. Under the system which is called "classificatory", the terms of relationship allied to the family and to near kin are extended to a number of people with whom no actual genetic relationship can be traced but who are grouped or classified with own kin. A man applies the term "father" not only to his own father but to all the people his father calls "brother" and this system is extended indefinitely. These terms expressing relationship are used instead of personal names, as terms of address. This system has the effect of reducing greatly the number of actual terms in use. But kinship terms are not mere names, for each carries with it a set pattern of behaviour. In Arnhem Land a man applies the term *mukul rumaro* (mother-in-law) to the daughter of his mother's mother's brother. He knows that he may look to this woman to provide him with a wife or wives and the pattern of behaviour

to, or association with, a totemic ancestor or a clan totem. 435

In the second category fall all things ordinary, non-sacred, 778 called *wäkkinŋu*, which in its literal translation means rubbishy, uncouth, outlandish, but is used also to denote merely the category of the non-sacred or "profane" in contrast with *yarkomirri*.

The first category, which comprises objects called *märdai'-* 778 *inboi* or *yarkomirri*, includes such things as the fine cere- [431] monial armlets made from material which has been removed from the actual totem after the *ŋarra* ceremony, and sent as gifts to friends in other clans. In addition, it includes all weapons and implements, such as canoe-paddles, certain spears, baskets of special type, and smoking pipes which carry the *mintji*, the special totemic patterns of the clan, to one of the totems of which they have been dedicated. This 778 dedication may take the form merely of the giving of the [552] sacred name, after which the object becomes *yarkomirri*, 784 or it may constitute a more elaborate ceremony in which 431 the *dälkärramirri*—the "caller of big names"—in his capacity of high priest, calls ceremonially over the object, the sacred *därrpäl* (hidden) names of the appropriate totem, thereby consecrating it. Thenceforth it becomes sacred. It is "*yarkomirri*". If it is a spear, game killed with it becomes *duyu* (tabu), if a canoe paddle, all food taken from the canoe propelled by the paddle is also tabu. Its chief attribute is that it possesses *marr*, spiritual power derived from the totem or totemic ancestor whose name it bears. Its use is prohibited to all but fully initiated men of the particular clan (or associated group of clans) from which it came, and in the case of the special, sacred *mintji* or painted designs, may not even be looked upon by profane eyes. To 431 possess these objects carries prestige, and their *marr* imparts [554] power and strength as well as *tjämbait*—hunting prowess, 777 778

431 "good luck" in hunting. They make the hunter *mel kärku-*
[777] *luk*, far seeing, (lit. eye-clear). Such objects are given regu-
778 larly to friends and to members of other clans, particularly
[604] to people who stand in the relationship of *wäkku* (son, woman speaking: sister's son, man speaking) but although they carry the obligation to make heavy ceremonial presentations in return, any idea of straight-out exchange—in the sense of economic equivalence, of barter or trade, in connection with things that are *yarkomirri,* is unthinkable.

784 Under certain circumstances, and after a lapse of time, a
778 rite may be performed to remove the tabu from these objects, particularly from canoe paddles, to enable the women and children to be fed on the fish or turtle secured from the canoe, after which they become *wäkkinŋu*, "ordinary" or non-sacred, and lose their *marr,* their "power" (to the initiated) and their "danger" (to the profane).

422 Objects of the *wäkkinŋu* type come under no such restric-
435 tions. In the category of the non-sacred are all a
[771] man's ordinary possessions, his spears and other weapons, canoe, fishing lines, nets, harpoons and all his personal equipment, and for a woman, her yam stick, domestic implements and utensils, her baskets—and in fact all her posses-
[562] sions. For no woman may possess or use any object which is *yarkomirri.*

000 In the foregoing account some of the incentives which lie behind the gathering of food and the manufacture of weapons and material objects have been described. A number of questions now arise. Does a man make all his own weapons and the implements which he requires for his own use, or does he acquire weapons from other people and in turn make them for others? If so, how are these exchanges made and on what terms; how are values assessed, payments made? Is the matter one of straight-out barter, the balancing

431 different from that of pure economic exchange, is indicated
602 by the use of a special term, *wetj*, which means "to give",
C192 but in a ceremonial sense, a sense quite distinct from that
577 for which the ordinary word for giving—*gurrupän*, (*gurrupulo*, imperative), is used. Again, my informant, Raiwälla of Mildjiŋi, in explaining the ceremonial exchange cycle, the *kumur märnda* relationship in which he was a very active participant, exclaimed, "If you have a good thing here, might be you give it to me. You think, 'I give it to him. I like to give it to him.' All right, *wetj gurrupulo närräna*[43] (you give to me)." To illustrate further the meaning of *wetj*, this man added, "If he asks, you give it to him because he asks. But if you give it yourself—that is *wetj*—that is *marr*, because you *like* to give it to him." "*Djal ni gurrupänarau*," he added in the
Like (desire) you to give,
language, i.e. it is *marr*[44] because you give it freely, spontaneously, from a desire to give and not because he has asked for it. Freely rendered, "If you have something you value, perhaps you may give it spontaneously to me, your partner in the ceremonial exchange cycle. Or you may think about it and waver."

431 602 577 In this phrase my informant expresses the momentary hesitance, the reluctance of a man with something he prizes, and would like to possess himself, to pass it on to his partner in the *kumur märnda* relationship. He thinks about it and wavers—but finally he decides to give it. The

[43] A little of the native text has been retained, chiefly because it is difficult to find the exact equivalent in English.

C192 [44] *Marr* has been defined (page 37) in part as "spiritual power" but it means much more than this. It is also the "power to respond" and is generally associated in some way with personal things. *Marr* is the "power", the "drive" which lies behind ritual and is the force which brings good and bad "luck", success in hunting.

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
O117 Murngin O117

he waits till everyone has returned to camp, then he hangs 578
round his neck a string bag stuffed with feathers or bark; and biting on this, and shaking his head from side to side, and glaring fiercely and growling, he rushes out into the open camp. He brandishes his spears, and in a high, tremulously passionate monotone, he hurls defiance and abuse at his offenders. A biting-bag is considered to be an aid to stirring up anger and to impress the audience, but I must admit the practice and the facial contortions have always moved me to unseemly laughter.

Relatives and friends 'shadow' a disputant in every camp quarrel and make a show of stemming his emotions. They are not directly concerned in the disturbance, so they clasp their arms round the middle of the 'growling' relative to suggest that they are holding him back, and in serious cases they may even break his spears or deflect them before they can be thrown. More often than not these 'shadows' are there merely as a matter of form, to lend reality; they make a pretence of holding back the apparently angry, gesticulating warrior who seems to be struggling to get to his enemies. I have often wondered just how ludicrous a contestant would appear if he happened to break away, but they are careful not to struggle hard enough to do this. With amusing ingenuity Marupia, who had acquired a smattering of pidgin English from traders, rushed toward his 'illiterate' opponent waving a handful of spears. With a sidelong glance, to see that I was looking, he shouted in pidgin: 'Good thing white man here, you dead fella long time.'

Nomads cheerfully dice with death; they face it con- 761
tinually, and escape so barely, that their philosophy becomes a cheerful fatalism. From childhood they look calmly into the face of death, so that its bitterness is past or at least reduced to such an extent that in time of excitement they [777] ●
regard almost certain death as a dangerous pleasure. Life is cheap, so cheap that a violent death to any but horde